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UNCLAS CHIANG MAI 000005

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR AND DOC

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: ANTI-FREE TRADE GROUPS RALLY IN FRONT OF CONSULATE

11. SUMMARY. Representatives from NGOs gathered in Chiang Mai to protest the ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks between the U.S. and Thailand marched to the Consulate on the morning of Jan. 9. Callin

12. Arriving shortly before 11 a.m., some 3,000-5,000 protesters - mostly from an umbrella organization calling itself the "Network of Civic Organizations Against Globalization" - assembled in front of the Consulate. Negotiators outlined their concerns that international property rights (IPR) would drive up the price for HIV/AIDS medication and adversely impact

13. The protest, described by post's local staff as the largest ever at the Consulate, ended calmly one hour after it reached the Consulate. The crowd cleared out by noon without incident, reassembled

14. While IPR concerns over antiretroviral AIDS medication topped the list of grievances, the groups involved in today's protest represented a wide segment of the Thai NGO community. In addition to AIDS concerns have increased partly as a result of the Thai-Chinese Early Harvest agreement, described by many here as "a nightmare for Northern farmers"

15. Anti-FTA campaigners had been active in Chiang Mai throughout the weekend, handing out leaflets and stickers and broadcasting announcements from loudspeaker trucks and in shopping areas. Police

CAMP